

Meeting House, Society of Friends
New York City.
New York Co

HABS No. 4-1

HABS
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31-NEYO,
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PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

District No. 4
Southern New York State

REDUCED COPIES OF MEASURED DRAWINGS

Historic American Buildings Survey
Wm. Dewey Foster, District Officer.
25 West 45th Street, New York City.

MEETING HOUSE OF THE SOCIETY OF FRIENDS

Rutherford Place and 15th Street, New York City

HABS
NY,
31-NEYO,
8-Location and Title

"This building is located on the South-east side of Stuyvesant Square, facing Stuyvesant Park. The property was formerly the northern end of the farm purchased by Petrus Stuyvesant for 6400 guilders shortly after he came to America in 1647. It comprised the land between 5th and 17th Streets and Broadway and the East River. At 2nd Avenue and 7th Street he built a commodious stone house". ("Evolution of Stuyvesant Village" - A.A.Rikeman)

"Stuyvesant Square was deeded to the City by P.G. Stuyvesant in 1836, but was maintained as a private park enclosed by a high fence for some years but was finally opened to the public". ("Iconography of New York City" - Stokes.)

"On June 30th 1860 Charles T. Bunting sold to Robert R. Willetts and Charles A. Maynard and others a lot which includes the entire front on Rutherford Place between 15th and 16th Streets for \$65,000. It was held by them in trust for the Society of Friends". ("Early New York Houses" - Pelletreau.) On this plot was erected the Meeting House under consideration, as well as the adjoining Seminary or College.

History and Description

"The liberal branch of the Quakers (called by others Hicksites) retained possession of the Hester Street House and School and removed in 1861 to the present Meeting House and Seminary at 15th to 16th Streets and Rutherford Place. These buildings were erected and probably designed by Charles T. Bunting (1804-1881), a member of the

Friends' Meeting House

meeting". ("Quakerism in New York" - John Cox, Jr.)

It is interesting to note in connection with the foregoing reference to Hicksites that: "Elias Hicks founded the branch known as Hicksites. He was one of the most active and energetic preachers the Society has ever known and his and his followers' views led to a complete separation between them and the 'Orthodox'. At the present time the 'Orthodox', greatly diminished in numbers, worship in the building in Gramercy Park. The Hicksites are far more numerous". ("Early New York Houses" - Pelletreau.)

The Building

The Meeting House is a simple gabled structure of smooth red brick, surmounted by a wood cornice painted white. The front (East) entrance is marked by a wood columned porch of agreeable proportions, and the shapes of the high double row of windows, with brown wood shutters, impart by their excellent spacing a delightful quality of dignity and quiet charm. The setting, with the spacious front and side lawns further enhances the building.

To the North is the Seminary where the Society maintains an excellent school for children of any denomination. There is a link between the Meeting House and the School which has been altered at a later date. The present survey has recorded only the Meeting House.

The principal element of the interior is the Meeting Hall, measuring approximately 55 feet wide by 64 feet long. It is simply treated but again marked by pleasant proportions in the elements of its design. The seating is raised on steps at the rear and at the sides, also again at the Elders' Platform at the

Friends' Meeting House

West end of the room. There is a balcony around three sides of the Hall; the ceiling is flat with a large cove at the walls. The wood dado, doors and trim are painted to imitate oak graining, forming a darker note against the grayish tan walls and the lighter plaster ceiling. The wood benches are noteworthy; one half of the seatings have solid backs (for men) while the other half, for use of the women members, have slots in the backs where women's bustles could project.

At the East is the Vestibule with Class Rooms and a Library on the Second Floor over it. These rooms were added later by cutting off part of the rear balcony space. In 1924 a central heating plant was installed and the large chimney was added at the West end of the building.

Written April 27th 1924 by

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Approved

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Revised 1934, H.C.F.